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over five hundred a year, and that John Wanamaker positively lost sleep over his failure to supply Homer with his accustomed brand of underwear last term. These recitals, and watching Daze, who wasn't sure whether to be distant or coy with the butler, kept me highly entertained, and if it hadn't been for a remark at the close of the soup, all would have been well. I think it was prompted by a momentary reckless solicitude for my welfare, on the part of her husband, but fixing me with a glittering eye, she asked me where I had learned to eat soup out of the side of my spoon. With all the composure I could command, I answered that I had the advantage of heredity in that accomplishment, and also in being able to do it noiselessly.

My patient and I occupied a suite of rooms, and I must say we had everything to make us comfortable; Mr. Hutchins even sent up the victrola, for which Lyda had a great weakness. He'd come up every morning before he went to his office, just to be sure there was nothing we wanted, and he was so kindly and genial, you never noticed the things he wasn't. Then, later in the morning, Daze would sail in, heavy with toilet water and tricked out like the Queen of Sheba.

Dr. Slater would come about noon, and his visit was the high light of our day. He generally stayed a good long time to liven us up, and of course he knew exactly the right thing to say to Lyda to put her at her ease. After lunch I'd read "Thelma" aloud, and then while my patient took a nap, I went out in one of the cars. The house was generally full of guests by the time I returned, and Daze, in evening dress, would be dispensing afternoon tea! Needless to say, my duties did not include participating.

(To be continued)

THE POSITION OF THE NURSING PROFESSION TODAY¹

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About six years ago from a squalid room over a wine shop in a Serbian town went forth a man, otherwise inconspicuous, who carried a bullet that was destined to kill 13,000,000 men, to maim and mutilate a countless multitude, to widow, orphan and starve still other uncounted millions of women and children and to destroy over three hundred billion dollars' worth of the world's wealth. That burden rests heavily on us all and will remain in part for generations. It is true

¹An address to the nurses of the Presbyterian Hospital, Philadelphia, May 6, 1920.

that his shot was but the stone cast among the armed offspring of the dragon's teeth sown by the militant leaders of world politics. Nevertheless, two important lessons can be drawn: first, the logical outcome of a mistaken policy; second, the incalculable influence of a single act.

Contrast another life, a young woman born just a week less than a century ago. As intense as was the lust to kill within the heart of this assassin of Belgrade, so burned the desire to save within the breast of Florence Nightingale. Just as the scenes were set for the havoc of death and destruction that we have witnessed, so was the stage laid in the Crimean War for this woman to demonstrate to the world the power of intelligent, skillful care in the saving of human life. As great as were all the losses of the world war, they are destined to be swallowed up by the salutary influences of the work to which this inspired woman gave the chief impetus. It is not given to many as to this man and to this woman to be landmarks of good or bad eminence, but it is given to every one to be the origin of concentric waves of influence that spread to shores unknown. It is hard to hold this in mind in the periods of humdrum or of stress which come inevitably to all.

I have ventured to speak thus briefly of generalities because more than we can realize depends upon the spirit and the policy in which many concrete problems now confronting the nursing profession are solved. It is difficult to read the future except by the past. But the past of the nursing profession is so recent that it affords few examples of that ebb and flow from which the analytical historian can solve the riddle of the future. The history of nursing since the inception of the modern movement has been a full current of expansion and increased opportunities; it has all transpired within a hundred years and most of it within the last fifty. The perspective is small but glorious, culminating in the wonderful response of the nurses in the late emergency, when more than 33,000 nurses volunteered for active service and thousands more stood ready to go when they could leave their civil responsibilities with a clear conscience. It is a far cry from the War of the Revolution when we find entered in the *Journal of Congress*, October 9, 1776, a resolution "that the wages of nurses be augmented to a dollar a week." It is a far cry from the days of Florence Nightingale when she was able by her hospital reforms to reduce the mortality in a military hospital from over 40 per cent to about 2 per cent. It is a long era in achievement since our Civil War, when the nursing was left to Sisters of Charity, to convalescent patients, and untrained women. In the Spanish American War, the nurses of the country first had an opportunity to demonstrate the essential character of their services, and in the last war there was

never any question of the necessity for a large and well trained force. It fell to my lot to observe closely the character of the work of a considerable number of nurses in the American Expeditionary Force. I have seen a thousand patients admitted to a hospital within ten days after it had been assigned to an empty French barracks, with only fifteen nurses, who were all that could be spared for it, at the time. Within that period the place was cleaned, equipped for all necessary work, and was functioning in a way that I sometimes feel is a reflection upon our civil hospitals. Of course the hospital corps men did most of the laborious work and it is far from my purpose to detract from the credit which rightfully belongs to them for their willingness and adaptability, but many of them had scarcely seen the inside of a hospital and without skilled direction and supervision there would have been chaos, suffering and a high mortality. These few nurses leavened that lump. They supplied the skilled direction of the diet, care and comfort of the patients, allowing the medical officers to concentrate on the medical and surgical work, of which there was sufficient to absorb their whole time and energy. I have never seen a nurse flinch from detail on presumably dangerous duty at the front, with operating teams. I have seen many disappointed that they could not go. I have known of instances when nurses remained at exacting work under shell fire or during bombing raids, and have knowledge of some who continued their duties even after being wounded. The country has reason to be proud of the record of its medical department in the war. In sanitation, preventive medicine, and in the treatment and care of the sick and wounded, that record has never been equalled, and to the nurses must go a large share of the credit, for without them this degree of success could never have been attained.

In spite of the glorious history of nursing, in spite of the rapid expansion of the field open to graduates, we find to-day not only an absolute scarcity of nurses for present needs, but an apparent widespread disinclination of young women to enter this calling. This must be only a temporary phenomenon, a part of the general unrest, a symptom of the unsettled balance of the social structure which is a legacy of this war, as it has been of all other wars. Society has placed the stamp of its approval upon the trained nurse. She is as necessary a part of the fabric of civilization as are labor, capital, politics and the professions. She is needed to-day not only to nurse the sick, but to teach the art to her successors, to serve in technical and administrative capacities, to disseminate useful knowledge of health, disease, and prevention through the medium of the social service, visiting nurse, and public health nursing movements. In

emergency hospitals and in the welfare departments of large industrial and commercial enterprises, in the warfare against tuberculosis, in sanitation, in the most efficient methods of dealing with infant mortality and in the problems peculiar to childbirth, there are fields of endeavor which will repay a hundred fold the enlightened nation that will employ an army of qualified women to disseminate and make effective the knowledge which we already have of the prevention and treatment of disease. This accumulated knowledge to a vast section of the population is as a closed book because of ignorance, superstition, poverty, carelessness, or the lack of practical means of initiating and carrying out effective measures. The nursing profession is the ideal agency through which this knowledge can be translated into wise and effective action.

These are mere indications of the immensity of the problems and work to which a devoted body of women can contribute. As concrete instances of what I mean, the following may be cited: The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reduced the mortality among a section of its small policy holders by 12.8 per cent in five years by visiting nurse services. New York City reduced infant mortality in ten years from 186 to 80 of each one thousand babies, very largely through nursing service. In Boston, out of 731 cases where proper medical and nursing care before birth were made available, the death rate among these babies during the first year of life was cut in half; during the second year, one-third. Still births were fifty per cent less than usual and the maternal mortality was reduced fifty per cent. These problems are to be met and solved, not after the manner of the theorist whose dreams take no account of the nature and frailties of humankind and who thinks to build in a day a social scheme upon a foundation of virtues which do not exist in us, but by a far sighted comprehension of the motives which actuate the ordinary man and woman, you and me, retaining the driving impulses of human endeavor which are individual creation, initiative, achievement and reward. These in themselves spell voluntary coöperation and not the dead level of standardized socialization, the dream of the foolish, the happy hunting ground of the lazy, the elysium of the improvident.

If you would entertain any such high ideas of your proper future, your ranks must be recruited up to full strength, and if society wishes to develop the potentialities for progress in this agency, it is for society to see to it that the movement shall not fail through lack of the necessary attractions. If you fail as nurses in your recruiting, society will not do without,—it is much too dependent upon your services,—but a back door will be found into your profession which will degrade your standards and will escape your control in spite of

all your efforts. Already the shortage of nurses has led to certain ill-advised attacks upon the height of your standards. It has been alleged that you desire to profit by the resulting scarcity. A movement is on foot to train and legalize attendants for the sick who shall enter a course of training with lower requirements and serve a shorter time. "A cheap nurse for a poor man" is an attractive popular slogan and the result, unless kept within proper bounds, may be embarrassing. The medical profession has made it possible for any man, however poor, to obtain medical service. The nursing profession must stir itself to deal with the growing demand for skilled attendance upon the sick, or the problem will be solved by others. The first duty of a man, said Roosevelt, is "to draw his own weight." Your first duty is to provide nursing facilities for the sick before you can go on to the full development of this great scheme for social betterment to which I have referred, otherwise you will be attacked in the flank and diverted from your highest tasks. Get recruits for your own sake and for the future of your profession,—get recruits; but do not waver in your fight to maintain the present standards or even to raise them if opportunity presents. The pendulum will swing. The reasons which now deter young women from flocking to our schools of nursing will be relieved or will be viewed differently when the present fever abates. The world has fallen from the rarified atmosphere of idealism and sacrifice, into a materialistic debauch. The young woman of a few years hence will think less of her pay envelope and more of her vocation, less of the house off and more of the hours on. The world is not going to lose its everlasting soul. The moral springs now meandering gaily through sentimental meadows will again be diverted into useful channels and made to turn the wheels of progress. The gushers of uplift will be throttled and connected with pipe lines that convey spiritual fuel to the nation. There is in nursing and its logical supplementary activities an appeal that will always draw a supply under normal circumstances.

To all who take part in the direction of the training and the activities of nurses, particularly to hospital boards and to the great uninformed public, I would say that the profession of nursing must be relieved of its handicaps as compared with other occupations. With the increase of wealth and the elevation of standards it now costs more to educate a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, a clergyman, a litterateur, a chemist, even a scientific farmer, than any one of them pays for his schooling. The nurse pays her own way and more. She has done and is doing more than "drawing her own weight." The neglect of public support of the specific field of the education of nurses, now contrasts sharply with the demand for her services. We are now

asking her for much greater service in the cause of humanity. Society cannot afford to be niggardly or selfish. The stream of private benefaction must be turned into this channel. Greater prizes of place and position should be established for those who become eminent in this profession as teachers and administrators. The eight-hour day is here. The reduction of drudgery in the course will be brought to the point where it is necessary only for the purpose of eliminating the temperamentally unfit and for the development of the individual. There will be a fund to remunerate teachers and possibly an arrangement with a school or university whereby the fundamental sciences will receive adequate presentation. There will be less of the military atmosphere than exists in some schools at the present time. There will be funds to maintain private nurse attendance upon ward patients in special need of it. I would call your attention to two such donations to the Presbyterian Hospital of Chicago in the sum of \$20,000 each, the income of each to provide a special nurse for post-operative or seriously ill patients.

These are some of the things that hospital managers, staffs and executives are thinking of to-day, and not only are they thinking, they are beginning to do them. If the true value and dignity of the position of the nurse in all her varied functions can be placed squarely before the public and before the minds of those who are choosing a calling, can we doubt that the lesser opportunities of commercial and industrial life now open to women will meet with less favor?

I do not believe that I have spoken of the impracticable or of the millennium. We must be patient, but we must be clear as to the issue and insistently progressive as to methods.

I have spoken to you as members of a profession, for nursing in its high demands for qualifications and character is no less. A remark of the late Dr. S. Weir Mitchell has always recurred to me in this connection,—“A business may prosper with honesty, a profession exacts honor.” I can leave with you no better thought.